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The world made safe for...

Chicago

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THE NEW SLAVERY

OR

The World Made Safe for Plutocracy

By SCOTT NEARING

308
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Box 627

Author of "Income", "Wages in the United States", "Reducing the Cost of Living", "Poverty and Riches", "Anthracite", Etc.

"The World must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty". *Woodrow Wilson, April 2, 1917,*

Published by the
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WHAT IS SLAVERY?

Webster's New International Dictionary—

"Bondage; Thralldom."

"Continued and wearisome labor, as of a slave; drudgery."

Century Dictionary—

"A State of Servitude."

"Entire subjection to the will and commands of another."

"Servitude; drudgery."

New International Encyclopedia—

"Legally that status of an individual or individuals characterized by perpetual and almost complete loss of personal and political liberty."

New English Dictionary—

"Severe toil like that of a slave; heavy labor, hard work, drudgery."

"The condition or fact of being entirely subject to, or under the domination of, some power of influence."

JUN 2 1943 FCR/Free

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1. What Is Slavery?

SLAVERY is involuntary subjection to arbitrary and irresponsible authority. The social system that is built about slavery develops a master class and a slave class. The master class calls the tune; the master class enjoys the music, and the slave class pays the bill.

Lincoln once said that no man is good enough to rule another man without that man's consent. In other words, no human being should be a master over another human being who is bound to the master under a system of involuntary servitude.

Any social system that enables one man to rule over another man without his consent is a slave system. The methods of the masters change. The devices by which one man exercises arbitrary and irresponsible authority over another differ in different periods of the world's history. Social systems built upon involuntary subjection have appeared in many ages and in many forms.

The age is incidental. The form is unimportant. Wherever one group of human beings succeeds in establishing sovereignty (the right to rule) over another group of human beings, without their consent, a slave system has been inaugurated. Called by whatever name, foisted upon the people by whatever fine sounding phrases, involuntary servitude is involuntary servitude, and (except as a punishment for certain forms of crime) involuntary servitude is slavery.

The master orders and directs; the slave obeys. The slave has little or no say in picking his master; the master, however, picks the slave. The slave is not consulted as to what he would like to do. He is told what to do. It is the master who decides questions of policy. The slave has no voice in such matters. The property, the happiness, the liberty, the very life of the slave is at the master's mercy.

Any system of social organization that gives one group of men, directly or indirectly, the power to make decisions for another group of men is a slave system. It permits one man to rule another without his consent.

Through the ages one set of clever men has schemed and plotted to secure arbitrary power over the remainder of the community. Once established, this power has been perpetuated through some device that enabled the master to hand the right of mastery from father to son.

Through the ages other men have arisen, proclaiming liberty, demanding justice and insisting upon the overthrow of the system of slavery. To them the common people have listened very gladly, because the great pulsing heart of the human race revolts against injustice, despotism and tyranny as eagerly as it welcomes justice and liberty.

The worst enemy of slavery is the belief that slavery is wrong. The greatest asset of democracy is the love of liberty which is met with wherever men live and labor.

The spreading of knowledge, the awakening of intelligence, the broadening of vision among the common people of the world is showing results. Democracy makes a stronger appeal to men than does despotism. Democratic institutions, which spell opportunity and happiness for the human race, will be forced upon the masters of the world just as soon as the common people realize that any slave system is a failure because it is a slave system, and that the remedy for slavery is democracy.

2. *Yearning for Liberty.*

THE yearning for liberty is one of the strongest of human impulses. All men feel it. Some are dominated by its power. Others are able to ignore its urge in the rush of everyday life, but when the issue is squarely presented and clearly seen, men love liberty as dearly as they love anything else in the world.

Through the ages mankind has sought truth and justice. At every hand the powers of vested interests have resisted, but little by little the battle has been won. Gradually the darkness of ignorance has been thrust aside by the glimmerings of knowledge that have made their way through the murk and the gloom.

That eternal vigilance, which is said to be the price of liberty, is encountered wherever human society has left a record. At one point the forces of liberty seem to be winning. At another, liberty and truth are being ruthlessly crushed to earth by the power of the privileged masters of life. The struggle goes on—eternally.*

The struggle must go on. Otherwise there is no hope and no progress.

The standards of liberty and justice have never yet been well formulated. Always they are inadequate and incomplete. Each group, each age in history, has its own ideas as to what liberty and justice really means. One age

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*Jupiter has conquered the world and has overwhelmed the human race with every sort of suffering, yet he finds that—

"The soul of man, like unextinguished fire,
Yet burns toward heaven with fierce reproach and doubt,
And lamentation and reluctant prayer,
Hurling up insurrection."

Shelley's "Prometheus Unbound," Act III, Scene 1.

sets an ideal. The next works it out in tangible form and the ideal is pushed forward.

Perfect liberty may never be attained. There may be no such thing for the human race as absolute justice. Liberty and justice, in their finality, exist in the human heart, but they are none the less real.

Indeed, they are in a sense more potent, lying thus in immortal embryo, than they would be as tangible institutions. Institutions are brought into being, perfected, kept past their time of highest usefulness and finally discarded. The hopes of men spring eternally, spontaneously from the soul, forming the true social immortality.

The human belief in liberty and justice manifests itself everywhere. There is no society, however primitive, which does not present a picture of the individual, demanding and in general receiving, a square deal from his fellows.

The human yearning for liberty and justice, so powerful in the case of the individual, thus becomes a dynamic, positive force in human life. Offer any man in modern western society double, treble, or quadruple his wages if he will sell himself or his children into chattel slavery. A few will accept, but the great majority will refuse immediately and unquestioningly.

The struggle which has been waged in the Western World against body slavery is only less significant than the struggle against mind slavery. The vested power of the mediaeval state and church insisted upon both. The exacting individualism of Western Europe refused to be bound by tradition and privilege. For centuries the contest was waged first for the right of liberty in belief; then for the right of liberty in thought. Protestantism and science were the children of the struggle that has left its impress on the face of the world.

There is not a social group, however primitive, in which men do not demand liberty and justice according

to their lights. The impulse, the yearning, the passionate resolve are all three tugging at the human heart. Sometimes they win; sometimes they lose, but they are ever ready for a new trial of strength.*

*The case is well stated in the following poem which refers to the Irish Revolutionists of 1914-1915:

"THE DUBLIN EXECUTION."

"Pray every man in his abode
And let the church bells toll,
For those who did not know the road,
But only saw the goal.

"Let there be weeping in the land
And Charity of mind
For those who did not understand,
Because their love was blind.

"Their errant scheme that we condemn,
All perished at a touch;
But much should be forgiven them
Because they loved much.

"Let no harsh tongue applaud their fate,
Or their clean names decry,
The men who had no strength to wait,
But only strength to die."

An anonymous poem published in the "Public," January 9, 1917.

3. *Democracy as Master.*

DEMOCRACY was intended to provide a means of running public affairs that would insure the greatest degree of liberty compatible with the perpetuation of society.

Special privilege government had been government by an artificially selected and artificially perpetuated minority. Utilitarians placed the emphasis on the greatest good to the greatest number—of people, not of acres—and the ideal of democracy was this ideal of serving the masses of mankind.

Democracy was organized to insure liberty.

During the late years of the Eighteenth Century Democracy was on the tip of the world's tongue. The choice was a choice of "liberty or death."

The idea of liberty was a part of the heritage of the Eighteenth Century world. The very spot at which the idea took tangible form in the United States—Independence Hall—houses the bell that is supposed to have rung out the news of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, dubbed "Liberty Bell," and is an object of veneration among the American people.

According to the ideals of those early democrats, no man was good enough to rule another man without that man's consent. The just powers of government were to be derived from the consent of the governed. There was the "tyranny of the majority," which still survived,—a tyranny that could be exercised, however, only subject to the sense of fair play in the community. Majority rule does not insure perfect liberty. That cannot be attained until all men learn to govern themselves. Majority power

in a democracy is, however, a long step forward from the minority government of feudal Europe.

The American colonists had fled to escape religious and political tyranny in the mother countries. They had drunk the cup of its bitterness in the long contest with England over the rights of taxation, of commerce, of manufacture, and of local political control. They had their fill of a mastery built upon the special privilege of an aristocratic minority. It was liberty and justice that they sought; hence they dedicated their new government to those ideals of liberty and justice which play so large a part in the spiritual life of mankind.

The matter was stated strongly and clearly by President Woodrow Wilson in a series of addresses delivered during January and February, 1916. At Pittsburgh the President said: "We want American character to display itself in what I may perhaps be allowed to call spiritual efficiency—clear, disinterested thinking and fearless action along the right lines of thought. America is nothing if it consists merely of each of us; it is something only if it consists of all of us, and it cannot consist of all of us unless our spirits are banded together in a common enterprise. That common enterprise is the enterprise of liberty and justice and right."*

"America was born into the world to do mankind service, and no man is a true American in whom the desire to do mankind service does not take precedence over the desire to serve himself. If I believed that the might of America was a threat to any free man in the world, I would wish America to be weak, but I believe the might of America is the might of righteous purpose and of a sincere love for the freedom of mankind."†

At another point, referring to the flag, the President said: "That flag was originally stained in very precious

*Addresses of President Wilson, House Document, 803, 64th Congress, 1st Session, Washington, 1916, p. 13.

†Ibid, p. 17.

blood, blood spilt, not for any dynasty, nor for any small controversies over national advantage, but in order that a little body of three million men in America might make sure that no man was their master."*

Democracy attempted to emancipate itself from the old forms of mastery and give to all an equal opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Men wished to be freed from the old tyrannies and slaveries. If anyone was to rule, he must rule only by the consent of those over whom his authority lay, and he must exercise that authority only while he employed it for service.

The early Americans pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to the guarantee of liberty and justice—to the overthrow of despotism and tyranny.

*Ibid, p. 18.

4. *Plutocratic Oligarchy.*

SUCH was the theory—of freedom from mastery—and it rang with a note of sincerity and power that aroused monarchical Europe when it was enunciated in France, to protest, hostility and war. Here, in the United States, democracy maintained itself, but through the years there have developed new forms of authority, special privilege, mastery, despotism and tyranny, until it becomes necessary to examine once again the meaning of "mastery" and of "slavery" and to decide what steps must be taken to make good the pledge of "liberty, equality, fraternity," that Eighteenth Century democracy gave to the world.

Democracy was to guarantee to all men popular control of public affairs, to eliminate special privilege, and provide for all equal opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. In reality, after a century and a half of the political democracy that grew out of the agitations of the Eighteenth Century we are in the grip of forces that exercise autocratic power over public and private affairs.

Big business is everywhere in the saddle dominating and dictating. Special privilege, built upon the private control of the resources and the machinery of production, rules cities, states and nations. Liberty, equality and fraternity have been swallowed up in the mad battle for commercial supremacy and economic power. The government machinery has been tampered with. Executives, legislatures, and courts have repeatedly and in well authenticated instances, yielded their authority to the industrial interests.

Wage earners and clerks, in industrial centers, comprise five-sixths of the gainfully occupied people of the

community. Yet the individual wage-earner or clerk works for a business to which he gives the best of his time and energy and in which he has no voice. With the exception of a small percentage of wage earners and clerks who belong to unions, they do not even have a voice in deciding upon the wages, hours and other conditions of their own employment.

Many of the great industries dictate politically to employees—refusing to allow them to participate in socialistic or other "radical" political activities; lining up their votes on election day; forcing them into political demonstrations, like the preparedness parades of 1916, and thus coercing them outside of the field of their business connections,—going, in fact, behind business relations into the civic interests and private lives of their workers.

Meanwhile the resources, capital, credit machinery, productive tools, and more important still, the avenues for the control of public opinion are in the hands of the men who exercise this authority over political and private life.

When does one man "rule over" another?

What is mastery?

Does the man who controls your opportunity to work, your working time, your political activities, your public utterances, your right to organize industrially and politically, the utterances of your minister, the reading matter that appears in your newspapers and magazines and the course of study that is given to your children by teachers of his selection in the school—does such a one exercise mastery over you? Was arbitrary and irresponsible power ever more complete? Exercising such arbitrary and irresponsible power, ruling over the lives of tens of millions without their consent, the masters of modern life are in control of a system of slavery more complete and effective than any that has ever preceded it. Roman imperialism was petty and weak when compared with modern plutocratic oligarchy.

Americans, with their customary good-natured intellectual indolence, have taken it for granted that having shaken off the fetters of serfdom in Europe and the shackles of Negro slavery in this country, they were free. Well, free from what?

Mastery has always been based upon some form of ownership. There is a group in the United States growing in size—of people who take more in keep than they give in service; people who own land, who own franchises, who own stocks, bonds, mortgages, and other titles to property, and many of those people are living without ever lifting a finger in toil, or giving a return in service for the living they get. Those people are parasites. They are the owners of the productive machinery with which their fellows must work in order to live. Because they own railroad and telephone lines, land and capital, they can say to other people, "If you wish to use these things, you pay me a return; you pay me an income or levy on my ownership."

Historically there have been a number of stages in the development of mastery. First, there was the ownership of the body. A man owned another man, and he took a whip to him, if necessary, saying, "You work for me, you toil and work and earn bread and I will eat it." That was the first form of economic mastery. There the master owned not the tools of production, but the human element in production. He owned the man himself.

Then in another stage, the owner of the land, the feudal baron or the landlord, said to the tenant who worked on his land: "You toil and work and stay on my land. You create bread and I will eat it." That was the feudal stage, under which the nobility and the clergy exercised a mastery over the rest of the community, by living upon the work that the rest of the community performed.

Now we have passed to another stage where the owners own the land, and the rights to the land, called franchises, and the tools with which men work, called capital, and owning the land, and owning the franchises, and owning the capital, they have control, through their title deeds, of the means by which their fellowmen earn a living—they own the job. That is capitalism. Capitalism means that certain individuals in the community own the means of livelihood; own the tools, the machines and the land, on which their fellowmen must work in order to live.

Here is hunger and ambition, driving, pulling, calling people to produce the means of satisfying their desires, and yonder, the land and capital, the means with which desires are satisfied. Hunger and ambition are pushing and calling men, and the means of satisfying hunger and ambition are in the hands of a group in the community who are owners of capital. And the capitalists say to those driven by hunger and ambition: "You toil and work and earn bread and we will eat it." They own the job! They own the right to work. They have it in their power to say: "You may work; you may not work." Therefore, owning the jobs, controlling the means to a livelihood, they are in a position where they can exact as their share a part of the product of those who work at the jobs without themselves rendering any service in any particular to their fellowmen.

You may hold a piece of land on the outskirts of Chicago. You may have bought it for a nominal sum. You may never have improved it an iota. You may simply have held it and paid incidental taxes on it, and, year after year, the people have toiled for the land value, and today, the land you bought for a hundred dollars an acre sells for ten thousand. The people of Chicago have produced the value; you take it. You may have lived in New Orleans, or San Francisco, or Portland, Maine, while that value was increasing. The increase has taken place and you appropriate the surplus value. You live off the work done by other people.

You hold ten thousand dollars in railroad bonds—whether you beg it or borrow it or steal it or earn it, or inherit it, or find it, whatever you please—it yields you five hundred dollars a year income, and you hand it on to your son, and it yields him five hundred dollars a year income. And for generation after generation, these title deeds can be handed from father to son,—title deeds that enable the owners to levy a tax upon the remainder of the people in return for their ownership.

The present system of mastery is based on the ownership by one group of people of the things upon which another group of people depend for their living. The masters of present day society have in their possession the natural resources, the tools, the franchises, the patents, and the other phases of the modern industrial system upon which so many depend for the opportunity of earning a living.

The chance to work today means livelihood and life. The man who cannot find a job cannot exist outside of the poorhouse or the jail. Jobs are the means through which the modern man secures income—the key to life.

When each man owned his own job,—the farm-owner, the store-owner, the owner of a little blacksmith shop or shoe-shop, or bake-shop,—he was his own master. The job was his, just as the tools of his trade were his.

Modern jobs are highly complex and are organized on an immense scale. The telephone and railroad systems; the huge financial institutions; the great manufacturing and mining enterprises are no longer one-man concerns. The railroads of the country, with less than five thousand general officers, provide jobs for more than a million and a half people. The last census showed that there were 1,996 manufacturing plants in the United States, each of which had more than 500 job-holders on its pay roll. The

total of the jobs offered by these 1,996 establishments was 2,182,187.

The modern job—the chance to work—is a little unit in a big machine. The man who owns the big machine owns the little individual job, and he dictates to the job-holder the conditions of his working life, and many of the conditions of his life out of working hours.

Unlike the slave owner and the feudal lord, the modern job-owner has no responsibility to the job-holder. The slave owner had to feed, clothe and house his slave—otherwise he lost his property. The feudal lord had to protect and assist his tenant. That was a part of his bargain with his overlord. The modern job-owner is at liberty, at any time, to sever his connection with the job-holder, and by throwing him out of work take away his chance of earning a living. While he keeps the job-holder on his pay roll, he may pay him impossibly low wages, overwork him under conditions that are unfit for the maintenance of decent human life. Barring feeble factory laws and health laws, he is at liberty to impose on the job-holder any form of treatment that the job-holder will tolerate.

5. *Job-Slavery.*

JOB-OWNING is the latest and probably the most complete system of mastery ever perfected. It is marvelous in its thoroughgoing effectiveness. Chattel-slavery involved merely the ownership of the body. The mind and the conscience were free. The chattel slave was held in physical bondage—a very ineffective, unsatisfactory method of control. Everywhere this kind of slavery has broken down of its own weight.

Behind serfdom there was land ownership and a religious sanction. "Divine right," "God's anointed," "The Supreme Will" were used to bulwark the position of the owning class. The system involved heavy responsibilities however, and laid them upon the shoulders of a group—the aristocracy,—who were, as a rule, unable to bear them wisely or well.

Job-ownership owes its effectiveness to a subtle psychological power that overwhelms the unconscious victim, making him a tool, at once easy to handle and easy to discard. The system of private ownership that succeeded feudalism taught the lesson of economic ambition so thoroughly that the idea has gripped the whole western world. The conditions of this Eighteenth Century life have passed, perhaps forever, but its psychology lingers everywhere. The job-holder has been taught that he must get ahead in the world; that if he practices the economic virtues—thrift, honesty, earnestness, persistence, efficiency—he will necessarily receive great economic reward; that he must support his family in the standard set by the community, and that to do all of these essential things, he must take a job and hold on to it. Having taken the job, he finds that in order to hold it, he must be faithful to the job-owner, even if that involves faithlessness to his

own ideas, his own ideals and even his own comrades. In other words, to keep his body comfortable and his family respectable, he must be ready to prostitute his mind and frequently barter away his soul.

The fierceness and power of the industrial machine grips men, overwhelms them, destroys them. As G. Lowes Dickinson puts it in his "Letters of a Chinese Official": "Your capital is alive. You produce, not because you will but because you must. * * * You have liberated forces you cannot control; you are caught yourselves in your own levers and cogs."

The driving power in chattel slavery was the lash. Under serfdom it was the fear of hunger. The modern system of job-ownership owes its effectiveness to the fact that it has built upon the most potent driving force in all the world—the driving force of a man's ambition—the driving force that comes from within the man himself. Thus job-owning, built upon an automatic self-drive principle, enables the job owner to exact an immensely valuable return in faithful service that neither chattel slavery nor serfdom ever made possible. Job-owning is thus the most thorough-going form of mastery yet devised by the ingenuity of man.

The job-owner enjoys the fruits of the job-taker's labor. As Kipling puts it, in his striking poem, "The Sons of Martha," the job takers stand "wary and watchful all their days, that their brethren's days may be long in the land." One of the most effective contrasts between the modern job-owner and the job-taker is contained in a little poem by Carl Sandburg, called "Child of the Romans":

The dago shovelman sits by the railroad track
Eating a noon meal of bread and bologna.
A train whirls by, and men and women at tables
Alive with red roses and yellow jonquils,
Eat steaks running with brown gravy,
Strawberries and cream, eclairs and coffee.

The dago shovelman finishes the dry bread and bologna,
Washes it down with a dipper from the water-boy,
And goes back to the second half of a ten-hour day's work
Keeping the road-bed so the roses and jonquils
Shake hardly at all in the cut glass vases
Standing slender on the tables in the dining cars."

For the job-owner, steaks, brown gravy, strawberries and cream, eclairs and coffee; for the job-taker dry bread and bologna.

Job owning is not without its dangers, however, and these dangers lurk in the system itself.

The job-holder must be intelligent in order to be efficient. If he is allowed to become too intelligent, however, he may overturn the whole system of the private ownership of the job, and insist on owning his own job again.

On the other hand, if the job-holder becomes too much of a routineer, he will be a mere creature of custom, unable either to suggest or to initiate improvements, and the scheme will collapse of its own weight.

These dangers have lurked in every form of mastery and they are doubly great in the modern system of job-ownership, because of the relatively high intelligence which it demands and the immensely great specialization that is involved in its maintenance.

Job-ownership is built of necessity on the ownership of land, resources, capital, credit, franchises and other special privileges. Its power of control goes far beyond mere ownership into the realms of social psychology.

The early colonists, who fled from the economic, political, social and religious tyranny of feudalism, believed that liberty and freedom from unjust mastery lay in the private ownership of the job. They had no thought of the modern industrial machine.

The abolitionists who fought slavery believed that freedom and liberty could be obtained by unshackling the body. They did not foresee the power of a shackled mind.

The modern world, seeking freedom, yearning for liberty and justice, aiming at the overthrow of the mastery that goes with irresponsible power, finds to its dismay that the ownership of the job carries with it, not only economic mastery, but political, social and even religious mastery, as well. Our ancestors sacrificed, fought, and died in order to be sure that no man was their master. Their descendants seem to have forgotten that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

6. *Wealth Mastery.*

THE economic forces, during the past few decades, have rushed America, with the remainder of the western world, toward a wealth abundance undreamed of in the past. The wealth is here—for the taking—for the making. The tools are here with which to make wealth in vaster proportions than at any previous time in the history of mankind.

During one short century in the United States, during the years that have passed since the mushroom growth of manufacturing that followed the stoppage of trade during the war of 1812, the system of home manufacturing has given place to factory industry. The newness of the continent, the abundance of the resources and the daring, adventurous spirit of the early settlers, made the development in the United States particularly rapid. The community was increasing in numbers by birth and immigration; resources were being turned speedily into usable forms,—men had only to reach out and touch a thing, when it seemed to turn into gold.

Machinery, which is merely man's power, supplemented and multiplied by the powers and forces of nature, produced enough for all and to spare. With the newly developed factory and agricultural machinery, with the railroads and the printing presses, there seemed to be no good reason why there should not be food for every mouth and clothing and shelter for every body. The cotton gin made it possible to clothe the world; the reaper, binder, thresher and railroad make it possible to feed the world. What more could anyone desire? Only this one thing—that the world be properly clothed and housed. But that has never happened.

The increase of American wealth has been phenomenal. From seven billions in 1850, the valuation of real and personal property had leaped to 250 billions by 1918—a thirty-six fold increase over a period of sixty-seven years during which the population increased but four fold.

More important than the total amount of American wealth is the fact that so large a proportion of it is in the form of productive machinery. While land values are by far the largest single element in this estimate of total national wealth, machinery—in factories, transportation (businesses), on farms and in mines is a factor of great importance in the total national wealth.

Equally significant with the increase of national wealth has been the increase of investable surplus. There is no way of gauging this increase accurately. Some idea of it may be gained from bank deposits, insurance statements, foreign and domestic investments and the like. Throughout the western world the increase in investment capital during the past fifty years has been extraordinary. Great Britain, France, Belgium and Holland have led the world in this regard, but the early years of the twentieth century found the United States forging to the front as a nation with surplus wealth. The European war gave the United States an even greater impetus in this direction.

The United States, until the past few years, has been a borrowing nation, for, in spite of her vast increase in wealth and in surplus, her needs have outstripped her possible productive power. This period in American economic history is rapidly passing, however, and the country is joining hands with the other great nations that are engaged in the business of foreign investment.

The surplus wealth of the nation—that part which remains after the workers, the owners of raw materials, and all of the others have used what they needed, or what they could get, is concentrated, for the most part, in the hands of a very few owners of wealth and controllers of wealth-

power. Theoretically the man who saves $50 and places it in a saving-fund owns the money. Practically, that money becomes a source of power in the hands of the banker, of the business man who comes to borrow and of those who control both bankers and business men through the power which they exercise in the world of finance.

The control of credit is the final word of authority in the present day business world, and that control is more completely in the hands of the plutocracy at the present time than it has been at any period since the struggle between the plutocracy and the democracy began to develop along modern lines.

Through its control of the nation's surplus, the plutocracy finds itself in a position of immense superiority. Every branch of the government, like every other social institution, must go to the plutocracy for the funds with which affairs are carried on. The wealth owners pay the tax in the first instance; the wealth owners are the philanthropists and the benefactors; they give to school, college, church and hospital. They hold the purse strings of the nation's surplus.

The control over the nation's surplus puts those who may exercise the control in a position of dizzying supremacy. They are at the apex—and they propose to use their new-won power for their further enrichment.

7. *Poverty Slavery.*

THE wealth-owners, the job-owners, the masters of the economic world receive the first fruits of industrial life. The wealth producers; the job takers, the slaves of the modern economic world take the leavings, the culls, the crusts and crumbs of life.

The pay of the wealth producers is so small; the uncertainties of industrial and social life are so great; the margin between wages and the cost of the necessaries of life is so narrow that the workers—millions of them—live in poverty.

The evidence on this point is abundant. The Reports of the Immigration Commission, the Reports of the Industrial Relations Commission, the Bulletins of the Federal Children's Bureau, and the publications of the United States Bureau of Health all show an appalling amount of poverty in the United States. A recent Bulletin issued by the United States Bureau of Health (Bulletin 76) indicated that there were in the neighborhood of 30,000,000 people in the United States living in poverty. For the most part these are the families of the workers.

John Galsworthy, in twelve lines, has given us a master picture of this poverty.

"Of a night without stars—wind withdr wn,
God's face hidden, indignity n ar me,
Drink and the l raffin flares to sear me—
Dust-colored hunger—so was I born!

"Of a city noon-day—sand through sieve
Sifting down, dust padding the glamor—
I of the desolate, white lipped clamor
Millioning fester—so do I live!

"Of a poor-house morning—not asking why,
Breath choked, dry-eyed—death of me staring;
Voices of strangers and no one caring—
God! who hath made me!—So shall I die!"

From birth to death it blights, warps, destroys.

"But," protests the self-righteous Pharisee, " it is his fault; he is a drunken, worthless loafer; he gets what he deserves. Let him be poor!"

The best answer to that argument that has been written in modern times is to be found in Shaw's introduction to "Major Barbara," "Now what does this Let Him Be Poor mean? It means let him be weak. Let him be ignorant. Let him become a nucleus of disease. Let him be a standing exhibition and example of ugliness and dirt. Let him have rickety children. Let him be cheap and let him drag his fellows down to his price by selling himself to do their work. Let his habitations turn our cities into poisonous congeries of slums. Let his daughters infect our young men with the diseases of the streets and his sons revenge him by turning the nation's manhood into scrofula, cowardice, cruelty, hypocrisy, political imbecility, and all the other fruits of oppression and mal-nutrition. * * * This being so, is it really wise to let him be poor? Would he not do ten times less harm as a prosperous burglar, incendiary, ravisher or murderer, to the utmost limits of humanity's comparatively negligible impulses in these directions? Suppose we were to abolish all penalties for such activities and decide that poverty is the one thing we will not tolerate—that every adult with less than, say, $1,800 a year, shall be painlessly but inexorably killed, and every hungry half naked child forcibly fattened and clothed, would that not be an enormous improvement on our existing system, which has already destroyed so many civilizations and is visibly destroying ours in the same way?"

Do you wonder that Froude writes, "The endurance of the inequalities of life by the poor is the marvel of human society"?

The whole system is so absurd—so overbalanced—that one is amazed that it can endure. The injustice to the poor is so monstrous; the special privileges of the rich are so immense, that it seems impossible that they should continue.

With gripping power, Edward Bellamy describes the situation in his well known parable of the Stage Coach, "By way of attempting to give the reader some general impression of the way people lived together in those days, and especially of the relations of the rich and poor to one another, perhaps I cannot do better than compare society as it was then to a prodigious coach which the masses of humanity were harnessed to and dragged toilsomely along a very hilly and sandy road. The driver was Hunger and permitted no lagging, though the pace was necessarily very slow. Despite the difficulty of drawing the coach at all along so hard a road, the top was covered with passengers who never got down, even at the steepest ascents. The seats on top were very breezy and comfortable. Well up out of the dust their occupants could enjoy the scenery at their leisure, or critically discuss the merits of the straining team. Naturally such places were in great demand and the competition for them was keen, every one seeking as the first end in life to secure a seat on the coach for himself and to leave it to his child after him. By the rule of the coach a man could leave his seat to whom he wished, but on the other hand there were many accidents by which it might at any time be wholly lost. For all that they were so easy, the seats were very insecure, and at every sudden jolt of the coach persons were slipping out of them and falling to the ground, where they were instantly compelled to take hold of the rope and help to drag the coach on which they had before ridden so pleasantly. It was naturally regarded as a terrible misfortune to lose one's seat, and the apprehension that this might happen to them or their friends was a constant cloud upon the happiness of those who rode.

"But did they think only of themselves you ask? Was not their very luxury rendered intolerable to them by comparison with the lot of their brothers and sisters in the harness, and the knowledge that their own weight added to their toil? Had they no compassion for fellow beings from whom fortune only distinguished them? Oh, yes; commiseration was frequently expressed by those who rode for those who had to pull the coach, especially when the vehicle came to a bad place in the road, as it was constantly doing, or to a particularly steep hill. At such times, the desperate straining of the team, their agonized leaping and plunging under the pitiless lashing of Hunger, the many who fainted at the rope and were trampled in the mire, made a very distressing spectacle, which often called forth highly creditable displays of feeling on the top of the coach. At such times the passengers would call down encouragingly to the toilers of the rope, exhorting them to patience, and holding out hopes of possible compensation in another world for the hardness of their lot, while others contributed to buy salves and liniments for the crippled and injured. It was agreed that it was a great pity that the coach should be so hard to pull, and there was a sense of general relief when the specially bad piece of road was gotten over. This relief was not, indeed, wholly on account of the team, for there was always some danger at these bad places of a general overturn in which all would lose their seats.

"It must in truth be admitted that the main effect of the spectacle of the misery of the toilers at the rope was to enhance the passenger's sense of the value of their seats upon the coach, and to cause them to hold on to them more desperately than before. If the passengers could only have felt assured that neither they nor their friends would ever fall from the top, it is probable that, beyond contributing

to the funds for liniments and bandages, they would have troubled themselves extremely little about those who dragged the coach."*

How far is Bellamy from the truth? Has he overstated it or understated it? How accurate is this picture? Does it do full justice to the child labor of Georgia, to the slums of New York, to the "south side" of Chicago, to Lawrence, Little Falls and Paterson, to Ludlow and Bisbee? Does it give a complete picture of the two hundred Americans with incomes of more than a million a year and the thirty millions of their fellow creatures living here in poverty?

Wealth mastery and poverty slavery are facts in the United States. The fact is inescapable, but no pen can do them full justice.

*"Looking Backward," Edward Bellamy.

8. *Finance on the Throne.*

THE wealth owner, sooner or later, becomes the aggressor. For a time he may hide in terror lest some one learn of his wealth and attempt to take it from him. Then comes the reaction, when the owner of a dollar decides to make two of it. The American plutocracy has reached that point and has made that decision. They have placed themselves in a position where they can exploit the worker who takes a job from them; exploit the consumer who buys the products; exploit the community by taking the social values which the community creates, and exploit foreign countries in all of these directions.

The United States until recent years was a borrowing nation. The early colonists brought with them little capital. Later immigrants came with their strong bodies, their willing hearts, but with little or no wealth. Meanwhile the country was expanding; resources were developed; mines and factories sprang up; transportation lines were established—all of which activities required capital and all of which promised handsome returns to the investors. American citizens furnished most of the capital required in the transformation of American economic life to its present status of large scale industry, but the capitalists of all of the leading European nations—particularly of England, France and Belgium—invested heavily in American property.

A generation ago the tide began to turn. The drastic economic changes that preceded and followed the hard times of the 'nineties placed large surplus funds at the disposal of American capital during the period of trust organization that extended from 1898 to 1901, conclusively proving America's ability to finance her own enterprises

and since that time America has been independent of European money.

Still the European investments in American properties were heavy. In 1913-14 they probably amounted to nearly eight billions of dollars (out of a total valuation of property of 200 billions).

The great war in Europe finished the work that the economic changes of the 'nineties had begun. The economic stress which the war placed upon Europe made the United States the lender and Europe the borrower. The export trade of the United States, which had hovered under the two billion mark for years, jumped to over three billions in 1915 and to four and a half billions in 1916. Europe paid for these huge purchases by selling American securities back to America, and by marketing government bonds in the United States.

The great war found the United States firmly established as a lending nation. The business prosperity incident to the war gave her an immense impetus toward a position of commanding superiority in the economic world.

The great economic surpluses accumulated in the United States since 1900 have in the meantime been seeking an outlet in the lands lying to the south. Mexico, Central America, the West Indies and South America possess immense natural resources which are for the most part undeveloped. The people are not yet awake to the danger of invasion of foreign capital. Labor is cheap; governments are complacent or timid and these lands offer unexcelled opportunities for commercial and industrial exploitation.

The American capitalists have not been slow to take advantage of these opportunities. More than a billion has been invested in Mexico and probably more than two billions in Central and South America. At the present time every effort is being made to add to these investments.

Washington's "mind your own business" policy was generally accepted in America as late as 1890. The economic expansion into the countries lying to the south of the United States has led to a wholly new spirit in the business world. Today American business interests are insisting upon the right to military and naval protection for all American investments. They are going further and asking for an economic application of the Monroe Doctrine.

Could the surplus wealth that is flowing into Central and South America be disposed of in the United States? Are there any persons here lacking the comforts—even the necessaries of life? Yes, there are millions living in abject poverty. The American people could utilize to advantage every dollar of this surplus in feeding, clothing housing, educating, road building and like activities. But so long as the surplus remains in the hands of the plutocracy it will go not where it will do the most good, but where it will earn the largest profits.

The vast sums of capital that are flowing toward the South American countries are intended to benefit the American plutocracy. Any benefit that may be derived by the people of South America is incidental to the main object—profit for the American capitalist.

Foreign investments provide benefit, in the main, for neither the people of South America nor the people of the United States. Their advantages go to the plutocracy.

9. *Liberty on the Scaffold.*

DURING those dark days in the history of the American democracy, when the Kings of Finance were coming into their own—gaining full control of the economic machinery of the nation, the liberties of the American people were being taken from them blatantly—without so much as a "by your leave."

First freedom of speech and freedom of assemblage were denied. Street meetings were suppressed; public halls were refused to bona fide organizations. Anyone who urged the preservation of industrial justice in the United States or who spoke in favor of peace was an "infamous traitor." "Patriotic" fervor showed itself in an almost ceaseless clamor. The leading business men were the chief "patriots" and anyone who had a word of opposition to utter against them or their interests was branded as a public enemy and treated accordingly.

The newspapers had long ago ceased to tell the truth. Now they became avowed pleaders for the vested interests.*

Ministers, educators, social workers and other professional people did not hesitate long. There was only one "sensible" thing to do—they went over in a body to the plutocracy. Those who stood out were disciplined in the most summary fashion.

The outcome was inevitable. It had been predicted time and time again—nowhere more suggestively than by Edgar Lee Masters,† who makes Daisy Fraser, woman of the town, review the professional men in these words:

Did you ever hear of Editor Whedon
Giving to the public treasury any of the money he received

*Quotation from Cobb.
†Spoon River Anthology.

For supporting candidates for office?
Or for writing up the canning factory
To get people to invest?
Or for suppressing the facts about the bank,
When it was rotten and ready to break?
Did you ever hear of the Circuit Judge
Helping anyone except the "Q" railroad,
Or the bankers? Or did Rev. Peet or Rev. Sibley
Give any part of their salary, earned by keeping still
Or speaking out as the leaders wished them to do,
To the building of the water-works?"

Then the soldiers and sailors began taking the law into their own hands,—breaking up meetings in Baltimore, New York, Boston and other cities, shooting citizens quite indiscriminately; insulting women; bullying, domineering, spreading a reign of terror among all of those elements in the population who did not agree with the views of the administration. These uniformed men were followed by secret police who infested the country—laying traps, bringing accusations, making false arrests and giving to the American people an excellent illustration of Czarism in one of its most offensive forms.

Finally came the suppression of those papers which differed radically with the administration upon war, conscription, the labor problem, or any other vital public issue. First the papers were declared unmailable under the espionage law. Then, because they had not appeared "regularly" they were denied second class mailing privileges, which practically meant that the papers in question had been excluded from the mails because they differed from the administration. Finally certain editors were indicted because they had circulated non-mailable matter.

The wreck of popular rights was complete. Free speech, freedom of assemblage, free press, "the tested foundation of political liberty"* had been swept aside. Then, to add insult to injury, women, carrying banners on

the streets of Washington as a part of a demand for the vote, were jailed for "disorderly conduct"; American citizens who wished to attend a peace conference called at Stockholm by the Russian Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates, were denied their passports under a law passed in 1799; Tom Mooney, his wife and several other labor men were "framed up" in San Francisco; over a thousand strikers and strike sympathizers were deported in open defiance of law and constitution by the mine owners of Bisbee, Ariz., and Frank Little was hanged in Butte for the sole crime of being a labor organizer.

The situation recalls the ironical question put by Li Hung Chang at the end of a description of a visit to Independence Hall in Philadelphia,—"They showed me a beautifully shaped old bell, which is in Independence Hall, and is called the Bell of Liberty; which means that at its ringing all men within sound of its voice know they are free. But they do not ring it any more because it is cracked. Is Liberty cracked also?"

The plutocracy had gained its point. Liberty was on the scaffold.

*President Wilson, April 2, 1917.

10. The Sops.

THE plutocratic oligarchy was in control. The great mass of men lived and suffered under the system of job slavery that had the United States in its grip. Wealth was master, its heel set roughly upon the neck of poverty. Meanwhile the plutocrats threw sops to the people—little crumbs of comfort in a sea of economic and social iniquity.

The plutocracy offered to people who were asking for bread, stones which the people themselves had crushed in the hard mill of experience. The plutocracy kept the bread, meanwhile, for its own.

The sop most frequently offered to the people during the past few years is called "efficiency," or "scientific management." The job-owners, who control the means of livelihood, say to the people, the wage slaves, millions of whom dwell in poverty,—"Produce more and you will get more." Efficiency means getting a larger return with a less expenditure of time, effort and money. The really important question is,—"Who gets more?"

Scientific management in industry means that the employer will make an individual wage contract with every man in his shop. Trade Unionism has been built upon the collective bargain. Instead of each man making an individual contract with the employer, all of the men, through their representatives, have made the contract. This method has provided the men with a monopoly power which is the only thing that stands, in ordinary years, between them and subsistance wages.

The proposition of the Scientific Manager is alluring. "Sign up under this plan," he says. "You will be able to make five cents more an hour through the bonus that we provide, you will not need to keep up your payments of

union dues and through our bonus system, you can earn as much as you care to."

All over the United States men have lent an ear to this argument, have abandoned their unions, increased their output, received bonuses and added to their total wages. At the same time they have thrown themselves on the mercy of their employers. When hard times come, piece rates and bonus rates can be cut, and the men have no redress.

The efficiency movement has invaded the schools very generally. In all grades of school work and in all types of school courses, mad efforts are being made to increase efficiency. Courses are being organized in salesmanship, commercial and industrial subjects, professional lines—indeed, any avenue that suggests the possibility of greater efficiency is followed up with avidity.

The business world is pushing the efficiency cult. The plutocracy is interested in scientific management in the factory and efficiency in education. Efficiency means greater productivity.

Has not the time come to stop emphasizing steel rails and calico? Is not the day dawning for the production of men and women? We can dispense with increases in material production, but men and women are indispensable to civilization.

Another sop, which tens of millions thought was the real thing, is governmental regulation. During the past fifty years there have been three successive phases of this regulation that are of peculiar interest at this point. First came railroad regulation, second came trust regulation and finally the regulation of public utilities. The same sequence appears in each case,—public indignation, protest and clamor; emasculated regulative measures; real regulation in charge of the parties to be regulated.

The government regulation in the United States may be compared with the case of a garden in which a number

of strawberry plants are growing. It is possible to dig out the strawberry plants and throw them on the sod heap. No one wishes to do that, however, because then the supply of berries will cease. It is possible to cut the runners, pinch the blossoms, nip off poor runty fruit, dig out the weeds, and stir up the ground about the roots enough so that the plants will be fine and strong—producing good sound fruit.

Regulation has had the same effect on quasi- public business that selection and cultivation had on strawberries. The regulators have cut off unwise projects; insisted upon care and judgment in new ventures, stirred up and pruned the organization and stimulated growth through this process of regulative cultivation. Regulation was intended to benefit the public. In reality, it has given its chief advantages to the corporations that have been regulated. The regulators have been busy, as the gardener is busy. They have fostered rather than hindered. The great utilities could not have gained more from the expenditures for regulation if they had paid the bills themselves instead of merely controlling the personnel and directing the operations of the commissions that have been maintained from the public treasury.

"Social reform" has stopped many a gap in the plutocratic ramparts and silenced many a protesting soul with the belief that the millenium had dawned at last. Child labor legislation, regulations to safeguard health, "welfare work" in its many forms,—the whole great round of "social legislation" has been opposed by one wing of the plutocracy while it was fostered by another. Its whole import has been to make the atrocities of capitalism less atrocious and more endurable—to keep the system of exploitation and wage slavery intact while it stopped some of the worst of its abuses. The victims, while less fearfully abused, were still victims.

Again there is philanthropy—the most generally patronized of all forms of social fire insurance—philan-

thropy, "taking off the insurrectionary edge of poverty with bread and treacle." Money, which is derived for the most part through exploitation and social injustice and special privilege, returned, in homeopathic doses, to stop the gaping wounds that the original wrong inflicted upon society. "It is good," said St. Augustine, "that thou givest bread to the hungry, but better were it that none hungered and that thou hadst none to give."

The philanthropy, which today is rampant over the whole of western civilization, is a symptom of the social disease that has infected society to its utmost being. Philanthropy in a democracy! The very idea is preposterous—if the people want schools, libraries or hospitals, they can afford to build them. They need not depend upon philanthropy. The man who offers to endow a democratic institution in a democratic community insults the community when he makes this offer. Philanthropy is an attribute of plutocracy—democracy knows it not.

Still they have filled the land so full of their clamor about "success," "rising to the top of the heap," "getting there," and "making things go" that Solomon himself might well be confused through the din. Ambition they have glorified; of material prosperity they have made a god that all of the people are taught to worship. So long as the world is dominated by the principle of material success, and while the plutocrats control the surplus wealth of the community, they can have their own way, buying it as they go.

The jungle spirit which is bred out of the jungle struggle of the western world knows no social principle. Its rule of life is the rule of tooth and claw—"An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." In that spirit has it built up the system of economic slavery and social vassalage that is now riding western civilization to its destruction; in the same spirit of patronizing superiority do they practice social reform and bestow alms, while they reap the advantages of efficiency and government regulation.

Is there such a thing as wage slavery? Do you answer,—"Yes"? Then, assuredly with the cult of efficiency accepted and practiced; with government regulation and social reform the rule of the road; with abounding philanthropy and endless almsgiving, wage slavery is still wage slavery—mitigated, perchance, but still slavery.

The southern slave owner, before the Civil war, was, for the most part kind to his slaves. It is probable that only a small percentage of the black people suffered actual hardship. Still, as slaves, these men and women were sold like so many cattle or copper ingots. Treated at the best, they were still slaves.

The plutocrat today is kind and considerate of his wage earners. He advocates reforms, and gives to charity. Notwithstanding all of his reforms—despite all of his charity, the wage earners are still slaves.

11. When Is a Slave Not a Slave?

WHEN is a slave not a slave?
When he is his own master.
When is a man his own master?

When he has a voice, with other men, in deciding upon the conditions under which he shall live.

So long as one man is permitted to rule other men without their consent, so long will he be master; so long will they be slaves. The conditions surrounding their lives may be ideal; they may enjoy every necessary, every comfort, every luxury at the hands of their bountiful masters, but so long as these necessaries, comforts and luxuries are a donation and not a right, so long the master will be master and the slave will be slave; so long will the doors of the cage (even though it be a gilded one) shut tight upon the prophets of liberty, justice and equality.

When is a slave not a slave? When he has acquired sufficient intelligence and mustered up enough courage to strike the shackles from his own body, mind and spirit.

"Heredity bondsmen! Know ye not
Who would be free themselves must strike the blow?
By their right arms the Conquest must be wrought?"

Thus Byron speaks, immortally, to the oppressed of the earth.

Further, stronger, grander, the point that Lowell makes—he lives in bondage who fears to strike the chains from his brothers' hands.

"Men! whose boast it is that ye
Come of fathers brave and free
If there breathe on earth a slave,
Are ye truly free and brave?

No! True Freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers' wear.
And with heart and hand to be
Earnest to make others free!

"They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak;
They are slaves who will not choose
Hatred, scoffing and abuse,
Rather than in silence shrink
From the truth they needs must think;
They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three."

When all the world is free—when liberty is for all and on equal terms then the slave is no longer a slave, for,—

"While there is a lower class, I am in it,
While there is a criminal class, I am of it,
While there is a soul in prison, I am not free."*

Human slavery will not be abolished until all enjoy equal opportunity for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; until all government derives its just power from the consent of the governed. Economic slavery will curse the earth while there is a master class that is able to say to a servant class,— "You work and toil and earn bread and I'll eat it." So long as there is a vestige of special privilege; so long as the sons and daughters of one part of the people enjoy rights and privileges denied to the sons and daughters of another part of the community, there will be slavery. The system of economic life that now dominates the western world is in its very essence a slave system, and while this system endures there will be economic slavery.

*Eugene V. Debs.

14. The Old Freedom.

THE old freedom—the freedom of the seers and the prophets; the freedom for which men have suffered and struggled and died down across the ages, is,—

1. The freedom of the body of a man to the end that he may make a living by his own efforts, at his own calling for himself and his family, without saying to any man "By your leave."

2. The freedom of mind and spirit which enables him to look the world in the face and to speak the real convictions of his soul unhampered and uncriticised.* To cry aloud against injustice, until it has given place to justice; to denounce falsehood until it has been supplanted by truth; to stand for the right, as he sees it, unflinching and unafraid, from the rising to the setting of the sun, and all through the watches of the dark night.

"Sink or swim; live or die; survive or perish, I am for the Declaration," cried John Adams, in his passionate plea for the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.

"Give me liverty or give me death," and "If this be treason, make the most of it," were the words in which Patrick Henry asserted his manhood.

William Lloyd Garrison was dragged through the streets of Boston by a broadcloth mob. His words in the old "Liberator" spoke the unmistakable language of liberty: "I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as Truth, and as uncompromising as Justice. * * *

*"If there is one thing that we love more than another in the United States it is that every man should have the privilege, unmolested and uncriticised, to utter the real convictions of his mind," said President Wilson at Soldiers' Memorial Hall, Pittsburgh, January 29, 1916.

I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not extenuate—I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard."

These are the accents of the old freedom—the freedom that lives in strong hearts and noble souls; the freedom over which no restraining influence can be exercised. Jails may open their doors; dungeons may gape; scaffolds may be erected—but the soul of the old freedom sweeps down across the centuries, irresistible, conquering and to conquer.

Let the spirit of that old freedom but assert itself, and the whole superstructure of the new slavery which the plutocratic oligarchy has erected for its profit goes crashing into chaos and oblivion. Let that spirit once grip the hearts and souls of men,—special privilege gives way to equal opportunity; fear to faith; hate to love; competition is swept aside by co-operation and brotherhood dominates the earth.

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ORGANIZATION

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